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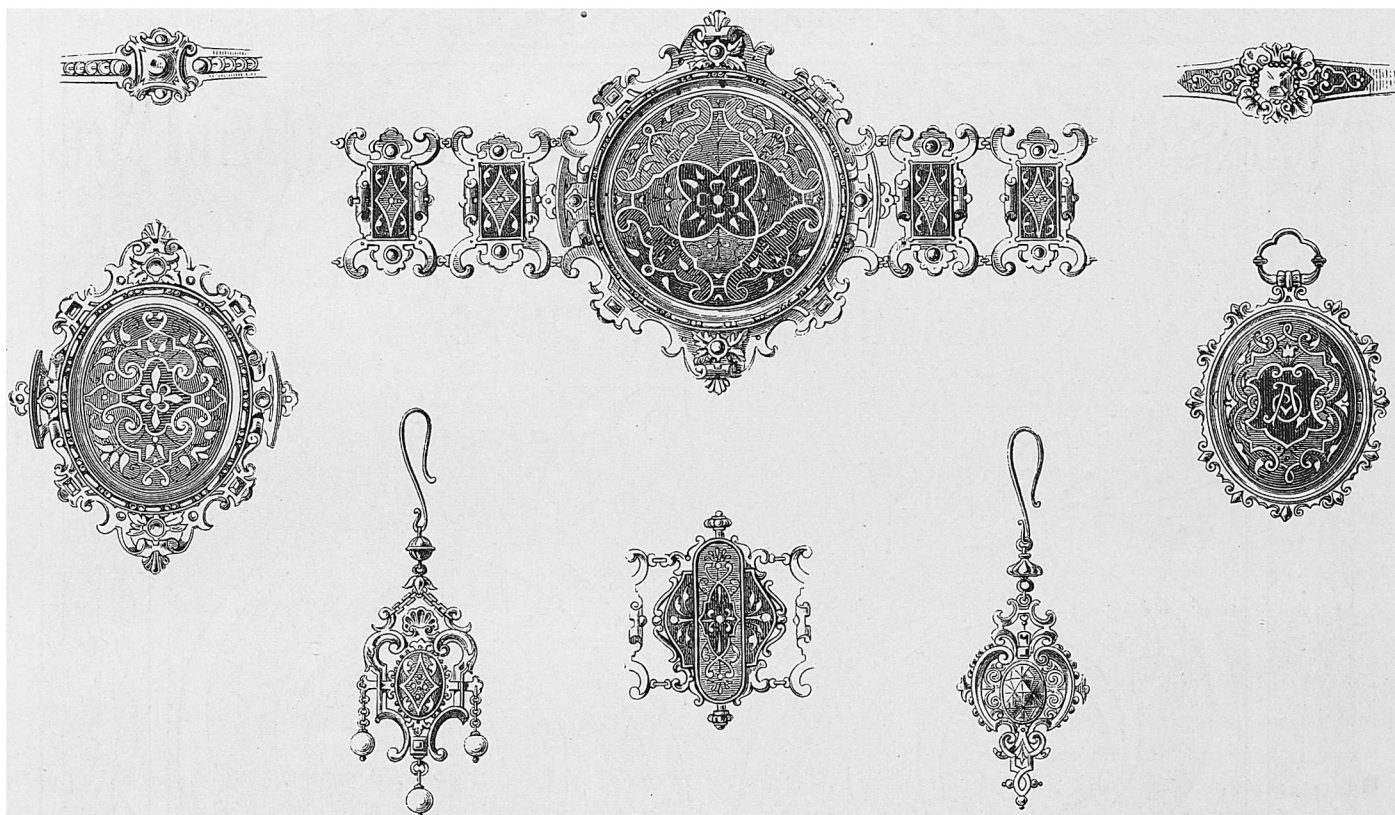
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No. 16—23. Jewellery designed in the Renaissance Style by Prof. A. Ortwein, Nuremberg.
Bracelet, Locket, Ear-pendants and Rings.

VARIOUS.

The Escorial.

This magnificent building, one of the chief glories of Spain, which was nearly destroyed by lightning, was originally a famous monastery of New Castile, and was situated about 30 miles to the north-west of Madrid. It has been called the eighth wonder of the world, and at the time of its erection (A. D. 1563—1584) surpassed all European buildings of its kind in size and magnificence. According to the national tradition the Escorial owed its existence to a vow made by Philip II. during the battle of St. Quentin, which was fought August 10, 1557. On that occasion, like William the Conqueror at Hastings, the King vowed to heaven that if the victory should be granted to him he would build and dedicate a monastery to St. Lorenzo, whose festival that day was. The full title of the building is "El Real Sitio de San Lorenzo el Real de Escorial". It is built in the form of a gridiron, in allusion to the instrument of St. Lawrence's martyrdom, if the mediæval legend has in it any truth. Some idea of the size of the Escorial can be formed when we add that it is composed of a rectangular parallelogram 744ft. from north to south, and 580ft. from east to west, — in other words, that it covered nearly the same space as Somerset-house or Russell-Square. It was divided throughout into long courts, which indicated the interstices of the bars. Taking the same work as our authority, we find that at each angle of this parallelogram were towers, representing the feet of the gridiron, which is supposed to be lying upside down; and from the centre of one of the sides sprung out a range of buildings forming the residence of the Sovereign, and representing the handle. Originally the building was intended to serve the triple purpose of a mo-

nastery, a palace, and a Royal mausoleum. It contained, among other attractions, a splendid chapel with a triple nave, 320ft. in length, and upwards of 300ft. in height to the top of the cupola. The Royal tomb, strangely called the Pantheon, was a magnificent octagon chamber, 36ft. in diameter and 38ft. in high, very richly decorated, and containing black marble sarcophagi in its eight sides; no members even of the Royal family were buried in it except actual Kings and their mothers. It has been repeatedly stated that the Escorial numbered no less than 14,000 doors and 11,000 windows, and that its cost was six millions of Spanish ducats. Previous to the sacking of the Escorial by the French in 1808, it contained, says Chambers, a library of 30,000 printed volumes, and 4,300 manuscripts, mainly treasures of Arabic literature. They were at that time forwarded to Madrid for safety, but, on being sent back to the Escorial when the danger of the war was passed, it was discovered that the contents of the library did not exceed 20,000 volumes, the rest, amounting to a third of the whole, having been irretrievably lost. The French troops, too, pillaged the palace of its valuable collection of coins, medals, and pictures, which, of course, have never been replaced. The Escorial is mentioned in terms of admiration by almost every traveller who has written upon Spain. Mr. Ford, however, one of the most recent writers who has described it, speaks of it as being in his day "a mere shadow of the past", and as being saved from going to utter ruin only by the grants of public money which were voted by the State for the express purpose of keeping it in repair and saving it from destruction.